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Title: Dark Meeting

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“Vendor, tell me your status,” Navrip quered of his vendor, Zoe. The vendor responded with the normal tally of gold collected and how many days were left before she would need to be paid again. Navrip made a mental note of it and turned to retire to his quarters in the Chaple of Desolation, the outpost of the Holy Disciples of Darkness upon the ruined continent known as Ice Island, in the unholy city of Caina. He was just about to enter into a reviere with his Queen, when a voice shattered the silence.

“Ah, finally, I find you,” came a wisened voice. Navrip opened his eyes and they came to rest upon a young man, wearing finery of a noble. His eyes gleamed with blue life, his body muscled and vigorous. His powerful frame was impressive, enough to make Navrip think he held some ogre blood in his lineage. His hands rested on the jeweled pomel of a long sword, it’s tip planted on the floor of the chapel, as he leaned upon it.

Navrip sneered. “Petty illusions,” he spoke plainly. The man frowned for a moment as Navrip, lifted his hand. He then sighed, and closed his eyes as

lines of power flowed from the Dark General's palm and encased the man. The youthful façade melted away to reveal a wrinkled countenance. And old man wearing robes the color of dusk stood before him. Navrip looked him up and down. The man, a human, as far as Navrip could tell, was frail. His flesh sagged on his bones, his once well built muscles hanging impotently, barely able to hold his frame up. He leaned heavily on a cane, the former sword, favoring his left leg. The only thing unchanged was the eyes, which still held a lively gleam.

"You are smarter than I thought," the old man spoke. "Very well taught in the ways of magic, I see."

"I see the truth that my Queen wishes me to see," Navrip replied. "Who are you and what brings you to this chapel?"

The man smiled. "Who I am does not matter, for the moment at least. But the reason I come is of utmost importance... I am dying."

Navrip scoffed. "And what makes you think I care about that, old fool?"

"Fool I am not, impetuous machine. I still hold enough power in my frame to tear yours asunder." Noticing that Navrip's eyes began to glow hotter, the man held up a hand. "But I am not here to do you harm."

No, you see, I do not wish to die.”

“My necromantic magic holds little power. If you wish, you may call upon the Order of the Ebon Skull. They can grant you unlife, for your fealty.”

The man chuckled at the thought. “Perhaps they could, had I a body that would survive the transition to unlife. No, you do not understand. To me, undeath is a fate worse than death, regardless of if I could survive the transition.”

“Then what have you come to me for? I can offer no further help than they.”

“Ah, but you can. You see, I know the secret to escaping my mortal coil without destroying it or corrupting it with undeath.”

“Then why do you not use this secret to escape it?”

“Why? Because I cannot do it alone. The components I need to cast the spell are difficult to attain. I need you to retrieve them for me.”

“Me? A moment ago you said you had the power to rip my body asunder. If that is true, then why do you need me?”

“Yes, it’s true I have personal power... However, I do not have man power. You have a guild behind you, one that would aid you in the recovery of the

components I need to  
recover my youth.”

Navrip’s eyes narrowed  
as he considered what  
the man said. “If you  
need aid, why did you  
come to my guild? Surely,  
the Ebon Skull or the  
Infernal Cult would have  
more power to aid you  
than my guild.”

“Because, simply put, I  
do not trust them. I  
have a distaste for  
undead, hence my  
reluctance to work with  
the Order. And the  
Infernal Cult dabbles too  
much in powers they do  
not fully understand. To  
work with them would  
draw the attention of  
powers I do not wish to  
notice my plans.”

“That can’t be the only  
reason you do not work  
with another group...”

The man’s eyes lowered.  
“Aye, it is true. I have  
selected you and your  
guild because I can be of  
benefit to them. I can  
grant you a knowledge  
that will give you  
something you desire  
greatly. The others...  
They would demand  
payments that I could not  
meet. You, I can meet.”

Navrip’s hollow, unnatural  
laugh echoed in the small  
room. “So, you come to  
me because I am one  
powerful enough to help  
you, yet weak enough to  
accept your offer.  
You’re stupid, but  
honest. So, tell me, what  
is this knowledge that  
you can grant me?”

“I shall not tell you  
yet. I need the assurance

that you will help me first.”

“No,” Navrip stated flatly.

The man’s head snapped up. “No? You cannot refuse me! You must help me! You must!” Suddenly, the man burst into a fit of coughing. An illness wracked his all ready aging frame and he collapsed to the floor. Navrip looked down on him unmercifully. The man claimed he knew something useful to Navrip, yet anything he knew would always be discovered in time. And time was something Navrip had infinite amounts of.

Finally, the man’s coughing subsided and he shakily brought himself to his feet, leaning even heavier on his oaken staff. His watery eyes were rimmed in red, and some of the life had seemed to leave them. “All right, I will give you a hint as to the knowledge... It deals with the corruption of good aligned artifacts to the side of darkness.”

“But sir, those things that serve the darkness all ready serve the side of light.”

The man chuckled again. “So you believe that? Very well, I know how to snuff the light out of artifacts, so that they may be used by the side of darkness.”

“You know that, do you?”

“Aye, I know that...”

Will you give your aid to me in return for the knowledge.”

Navrip pondered it for a moment, and only a moment. “Yes, I shall.”

The old man smiled.  
“Good. I shall return in a week’s time. Gather your men, for we shall meet then to discuss the mission.” The man spoke the words to Recall and vanished, leaving Navrip to ponder what was just revealed.